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Gay, John  
To a lady on her passion  
for old china

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T6  
1725a



John Gay  
*To a Lady on her Passion  
for Old China*

1725

214363  
22.7.27









*Five hundred and fifty copies have been printed  
of which five hundred are for sale*



Printed by Frederick Hall M.A.  
at the Clarendon Press  
Oxford England  
1925

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Humphrey Milford M.A.  
Publisher to the University  
of Oxford



AY'S Epistle *To a Lady on her Passion for Old China* was published anonymously in 1725. The present reprint is from Mr. Thomas J. Wise's uncut copy, which, when he compiled the Catalogue of his library, Mr. Wise believed to be unique. A copy has since been unearthed in the British Museum, and the reprint has been checked by it.

The pamphlet consists of a half-sheet of two leaves followed by a sheet of four leaves. The last leaf is blank.





*John Gay*

*To a Lady on her Passion*

*for Old China*

1725





T O A

L A D Y

ON

*Her PASSION for old CHINA.*





T O A

L A D Y

ON HER

P A S S I O N

FOR

O L D C H I N A.

BY

John Fox



L O N D O N:

Printed for J. TONSON in the *Strand*. 1725.

*Facsimile*  
*Printed from type at the*  
*Clarendon Press*  
*1925*

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T O A  
L A D Y  
O N

*Her P A S S I O N for old C H I N A.*



H A T ecstasies her bosom fire !  
How her eyes languish with desire !  
How blest, how happy should I be,  
Were that fond glance bestow'd on me !

New doubts and fears within me war :  
What rival's near ? a *China* Jar.

B

*China's*

*China's* the passion of her soul ;  
 A cup, a plate, a dish, a bowl  
 Can kindle wishes in her breast,  
 Inflame with joy, or break her rest.

Some gems collect ; some medals prize,  
 And view the rust with lovers eyes ;  
 Some court the stars at midnight hours ;  
 Some doat on Nature's charms in flowers !  
 But ev'ry beauty I can trace  
 In *Laura's* mind, in *Laura's* face ;  
 My stars are in this brighter sphere,  
 My lilly and my rose is here.

Philosophers more grave than wife  
 Hunt science down in Butterflies ;  
 Or fondly poring on a Spider,  
 Stretch human contemplation wider ;  
*Fossiles* give joy to *Galen's* soul,  
 He digs for knowledge, like a Mole ;

In shells so learn'd, that all agree  
 No fish that swims knows more than he !  
 In such pursuits if wisdom lies,  
 Who, *Laura*, shall thy taste despise ?

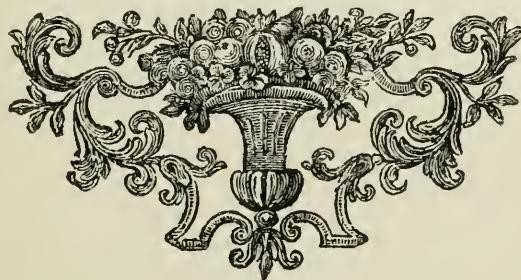
When I some antique Jar behold,  
 Or white, or blue, or speck'd with gold,  
 Vessels so pure, and so refin'd  
 Appear the types of woman-kind :  
 Are they not valu'd for their beauty,  
 Too fair, too fine for houſhold duty ?  
 With flowers and gold and azure dy'd,  
 Of ev'ry house the grace and pride ?  
 How white, how polish'd is their skin,  
 And valu'd moſt when only ſeen !  
 She who before was highest priz'd  
 Is for a crack or flaw despis'd ;  
 I grant they're frail, yet they're ſo rare,  
 The treasure cannot coſt too dear !

But Man is made of courser stuff,  
 And serves convenience well enough ;  
 He's a strong earthen vessel made,  
 For drudging, labour, toil and trade ;  
 And when wives lose their other self,  
 With ease they bear the loss of *Delf*.

Husbands more covetous than sage  
 Condemn this *China*-buying rage ;  
 They count that woman's prudence little,  
 Who sets her heart on things so brittle.  
 But are those wife-men's inclinations  
 Fixt on more strong, more sure foundations ?  
 If all that's frail we must despise,  
 No human view or scheme is wise.  
 Are not Ambition's hopes as weak ?  
 They swell like bubbles, shine and break.  
 A Courtier's promise is so flight,  
 'Tis made at noon, and broke at night.

What pleasure's sure? The Mifs you keep  
Breaks both your fortune and your sleep.  
The man who loves a country life,  
Breaks all the comforts of his wife;  
And if he quit his farm and plough,  
His wife in town may break her vow.  
Love, *Laura*, love, while youth is warm,  
For each new winter breaks a charm;  
And woman's not like *China* fold,  
But cheaper grows in growing old;  
Then quickly chuse the prudent part,  
Or else you break a faithful heart.

F I N I S.



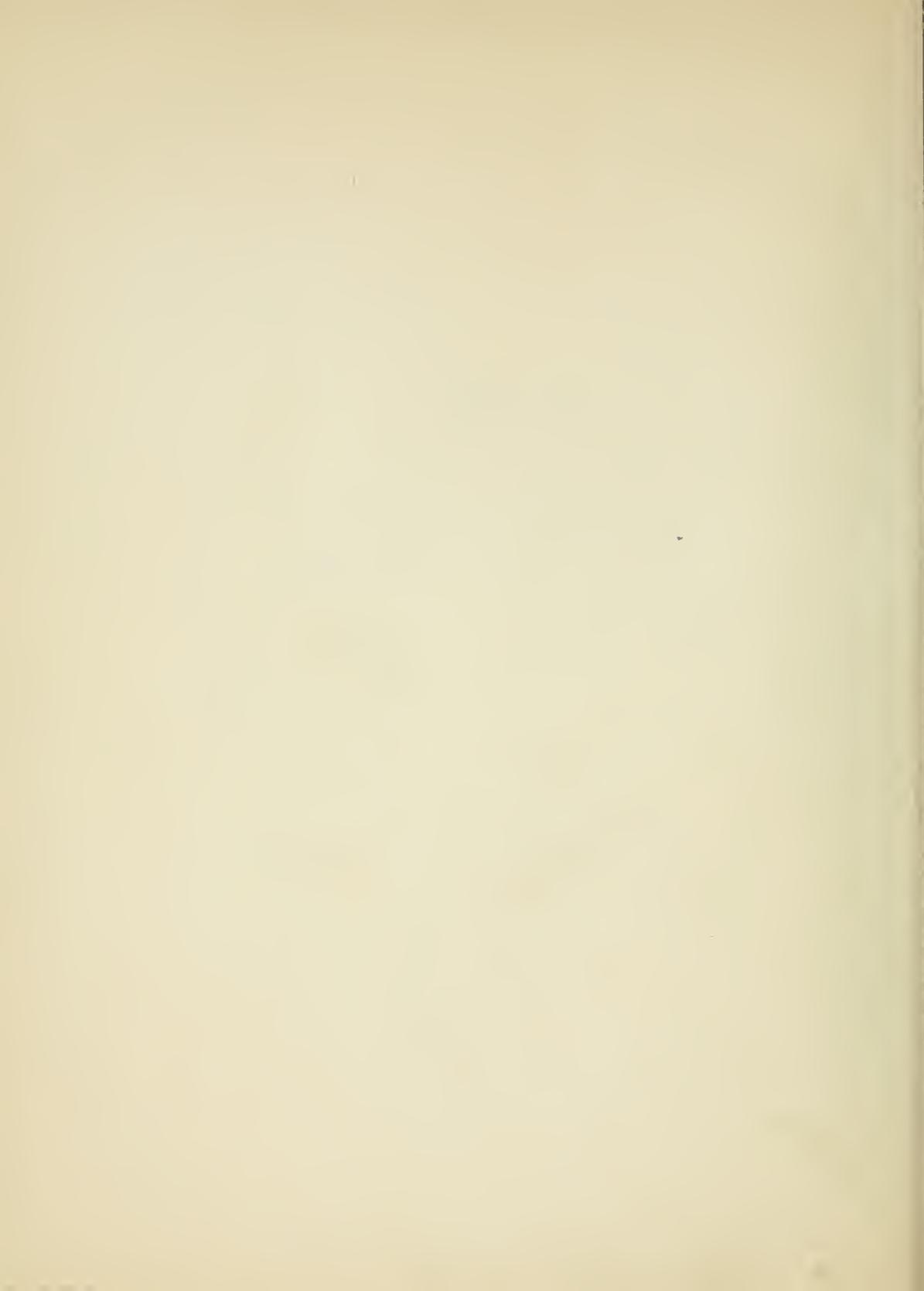




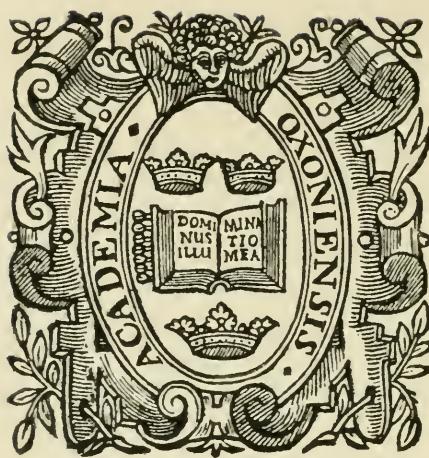


## NOTE

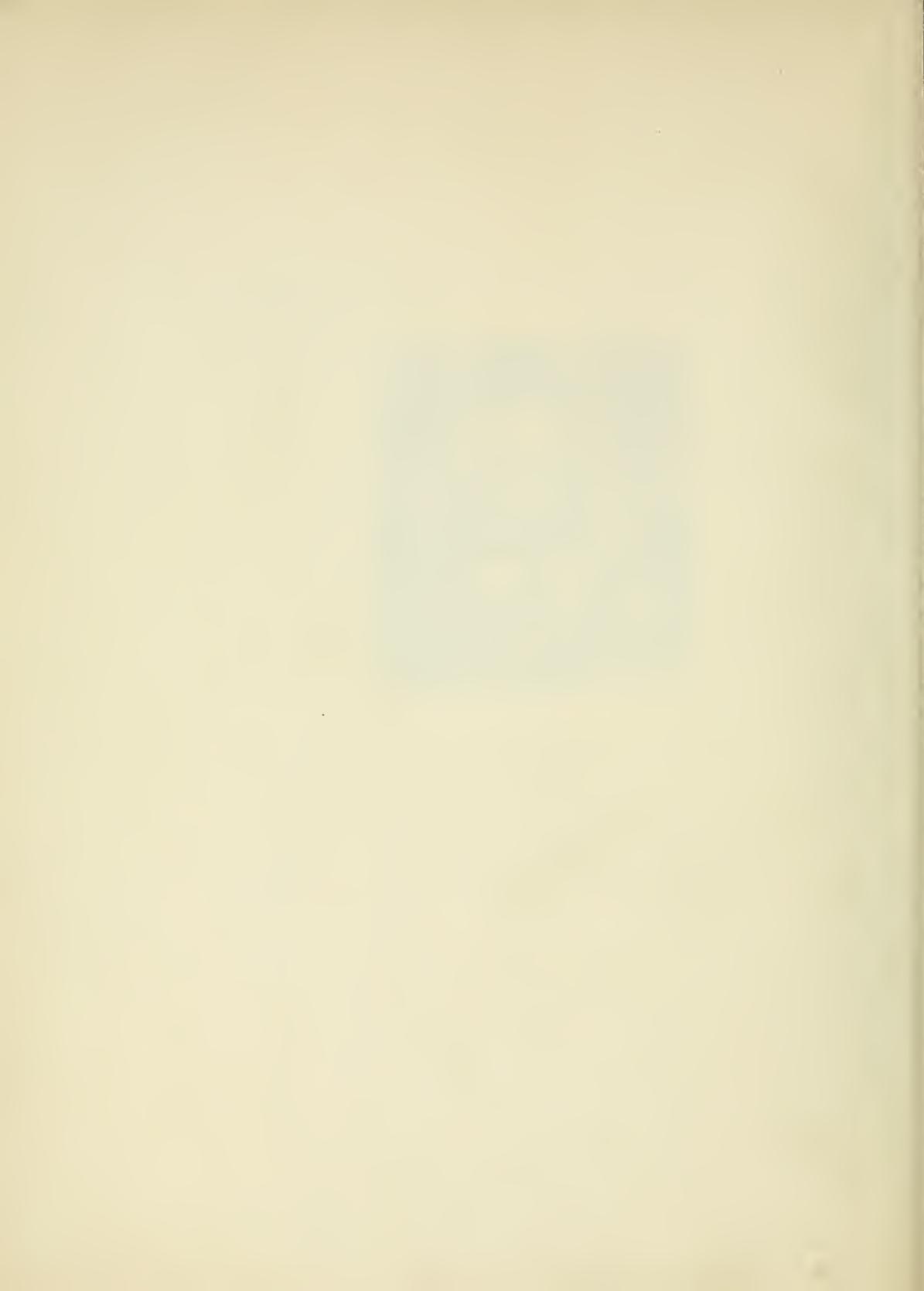
For the question of authorship see  
the forthcoming edition of Gay's Poems  
by Mr. G. C. Faber in the *Oxford  
Poets*, p. xxvii.



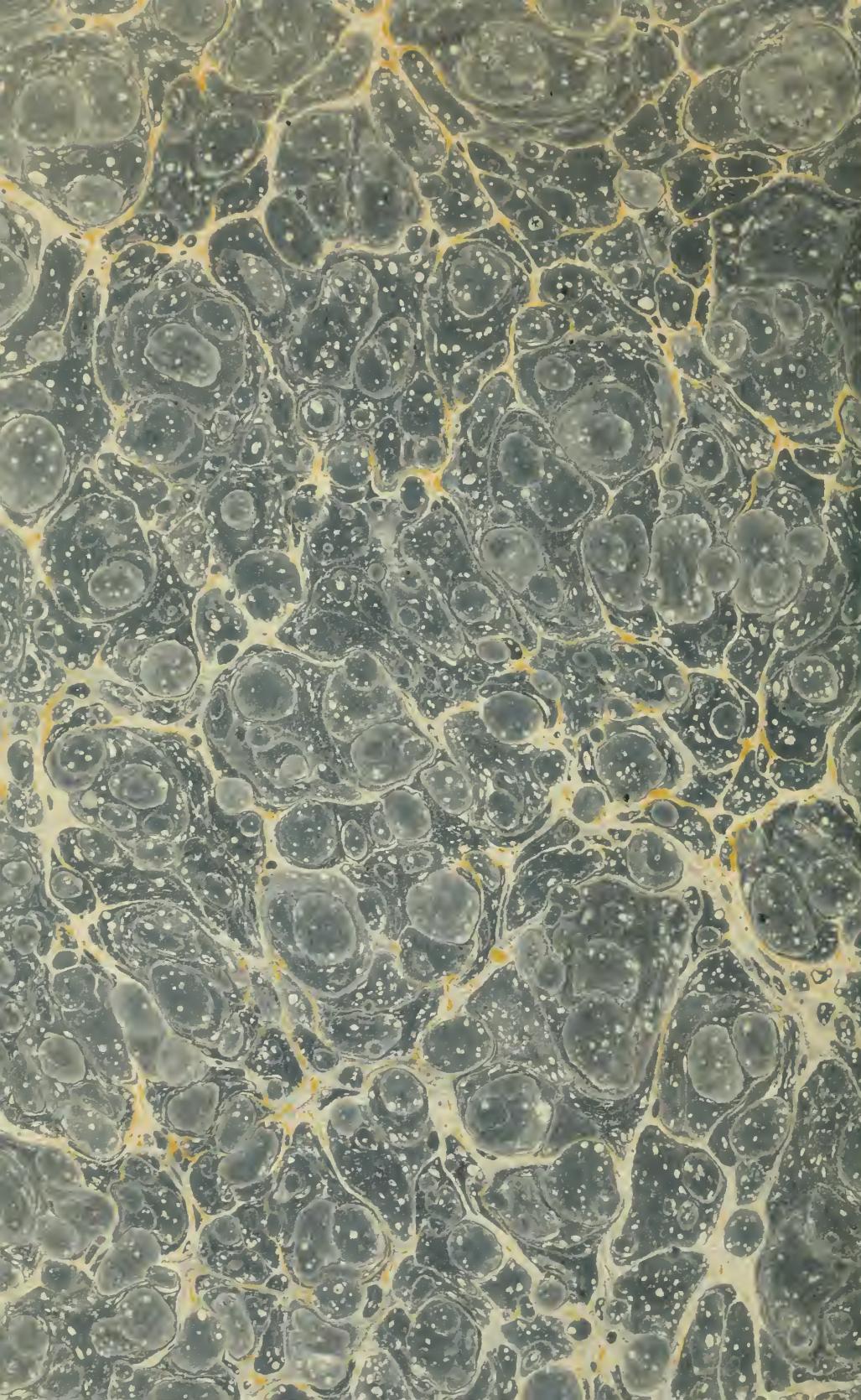












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